

What is the Access and Hearings Unit and What does it do?

We Help You:

- ***To Identify Regulations:*** We work with you to interpret Design Manual guidance and other requirements set forth in RCWs, WACs, and CFRs related to limited access and managed access highways, and then we help identify how that effects your project.
- ***Prepare Project Management Plans (PMP):*** We prefer to be involved with project teams rather than simply review their work products after a substantial effort has been invested. This philosophy of involvement means all parties share the benefit of information flow early in the development of a project, such that expectations and project documentation requirements are identified and planned for in advance. Your PMP is the document in which these expectations and tasks related to access reports and project hearings are best identified. Let us help you with that.
- ***Prepare Detailed Project Schedules:*** Coupled with a solid PMP, the Project schedule shows task ownership, durations and dependencies. It helps to chart this stuff out early in the game to have a project run smoothly. We want to help teams account for the access documentation and hearing requirements their particular project entails. We are skilled in developing schedules using the latest WSDOT tools, such as the PDIS (Project Delivery Information System.) Your project's specific PDIS task entries might include any of the following:
 - ✓ ***Access Point Revisions*** (either Interstate or State routes). What level of reporting documentation will be required, and how long will it take to accomplish and get approved? Is FHWA involved? Design Manual Chapter 1425 is referenced when planning and doing this type of work. A good PMP and Project Schedule is the place to reflect this information.
 - ✓ ***Access Reports.*** Access Reports are required for Access Hearings and are used as an official notification to local governments of a proposed project action. Design Manual Chapters 1420 and 1430 come into play with Access Reports.
 - ✓ ***Project Hearings.*** Project hearings are legal proceedings and are required in certain cases. The Access and Hearings Unit is responsible to coordinate all hearings for WSDOT projects statewide. We help you identify hearing requirements for your project and we coordinate the process and people involved with you before, during, and post-hearing. Types of hearings include: Limited Access, Environmental, Design, Corridor, or a combination thereof. Call us to set your hearing date.
 - ✓ ***Limited Access and Right of Way Plans Certification.*** Our unit works very closely with Regions and HQ Right of Way plans producers to assure the limited access issues are dealt with according to law. Since in most cases an approved R/W Plan must be obtained prior to acquisition of real estate parcels, our work is critical for project Real Estate staff in terms of task dependencies and project ad dates.

- ✓ ***Stay on track to Right of Way Certification.*** As mentioned above, an approved right of way plan is crucial for project delivery.

- ***Obtain Your Project Approvals:*** The reporting, mapping, and hearing requirements mentioned above all coincide with project milestones and approvals needed to authorize construction of your project. When we review Interchange Justification Reports and Access Reports, it's important for us to have been involved with the development of the documentation. Our prior knowledge and involvement with your project will assure the most efficient process flow at the critical stage of a WSDOT Headquarters or Federal Highways Administration approval process.

More Specific Details about us and Our Work

The WSDOT Access and Hearings Unit:

- Reviews and maintains the following data bases:
 1. RAMPS Data Base
 2. Managed Access Data Base
 3. Master Plan for Limited Access Route listing
 4. Master Plan for Median Crossovers
- Reviews and approves requests for breaks, changes to and the use of WSDOT limited access right-of-way according to the requirements of CFR, RCW, WAC and WSDOT Design Manual.
- Reviews and revises WACs to conform to WSDOT policy and conducts WAC hearings.
- Is responsible for the review and approval of:
 1. Interchange Justification Reports and IJR team participation. Interchange Justification Report is a new term used for these reports instead of Access Point Decision Report. A Design Manual update of Chapter 1425 was published May 2006, reflecting this move to better align with nationally used terminology.
 2. Access Reports
 3. Project Summaries, as related to Limited and Managed Access highways
 4. Air Space Lease Requests (including those for Cellular/Telecommunication)
 5. Surplus Property Requests
 6. Right of Way and Limited Access Plan Revision Requests
 7. Utility Agreements
- Reviews, revises and updates Design Manual Chapters relating to access issues.
- Reviews other WSDOT manuals and guidance relating to Limited and Managed Access.